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ABSTRACT

The Family Development Research Program (FDRP) was an omnibus effort to serve low-income, low education families by providing education, nutrition, health, safety, and human service resources for the 108 families initially recruited. This paper describes the program and summarizes findings from the longitudinal evaluation. Home visitors provided advocacy, information, and support for mothers and their infants from before the child's birth until the child was 5 years old. Infants were provided child care from the age of 6 months onward. Findings from the 10-year follow-up indicated that, compared with contrast youth, more of the FDRP youths expressed a liking for their own physical and personal attributes; and they were also more likely to see themselves in a schooling situation 5 years in the future. Contrast youth were more likely than FDRP youth to say that the worst thing about school was trouble that one could get into. The strongest findings of the 10-year follow-up were for juvenile delinquency. Only 6 percent of FDRP youth, compared to 22 percent of contrast youth, were processed as probation cases by the County Probation Department; contrast youth also had more serious offenses. Juvenile court costs per child were less for FDRP youth than for contrast youth. Although there were no educational differences between FDRP males and contrast males, FDRP females had better grades and fewer school absences than did contrast females. Due to difficulties in locating the adults from the contrast group, data are not available to contrast current adult functioning. (KB)

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Longitudinal outcomes from the Family Development Research Program

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The Family Development Research Program (FDRP) was begun as an omnibus effort to serve low-income, low education families by providing education, nutrition, health, safety, and human service resources for the 108 families initially recruited. Under the direction of Project Director, Dr. J. R. Lally, very deprived families were recruited early in the last trimester of pregnancy. All the families had an income of less than $5000 per year in 1970 dollars. Mothers had less than a high school education, and no work or semiskilled work history. Their mean age was 18 years and over 85% of them were single parents.

Home visitors, called CDTs (Child Development Trainers) visited each family weekly from before the birth of the baby until the child was 5 years old and graduated from the FDRP. The CDTs were parent advocates and provided a wealth of support, information, resources, and encouragement for the mothers's own learning careers as well as for the infants'.

Babies entered the Children's Center (CC) childcare program when they were 6 months old. Five years of high quality childcare was seen as a strong support for families to be able to meet their life challenges and goals as well as a safe, nurturing environment in which babies and young children could flourish. Training for the CC staff was thorough, ongoing and supported by a training manual written expressly for the staff (Honig & Lally, 1981). Program curriculum was theoretically based on Erikson and Piaget as well as language development theory and Alinsky's ideas of empowerment of poverty families. From John Dewey and the British Infant school movement, we conceptualized the environment as supporting child-chosen opportunities for learning and peer interaction in a space rather than time oriented framework. Thus classrooms

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provided many areas of choice for the children. The excellence of the teacher interactions was supported by research tools to demonstrate their optimal interactions (Honig & Lally, 1988).

In the Infant-Fold, four infants were assigned to one teacher for intensive nurturing and educational experiences. Teachers used their own bodies to provide intimate nurturing as well as books and toys generously and created many sensorimotor and early preoperational learning materials themselves. Emphasis on using daily routines to embed curricular goals was strong.

From 18 to 60 months, children were together in an open education, free-choice environment, with mixed age grouping. Available were: a large muscle area, a fine motor area, a creative expression and snack area, and a sense perception area, in addition to outdoor play areas.

In-depth interviews with mothers, 3 and 5 years after home visitation was initiated, generated very positive responses to the contributions of the paraprofessional home visitors (See samples of maternal remarks in Honig, 1979).

When the children had graduated to kindergarten and first grade, their development was compared with that of carefully matched contrast children in the many classrooms in the Upstate urban area where the children lived. They were more positive with adults; but also more likely to try to get their needs met with adults, as they had come to trust and expect help from adults while in the program (Honig, Lally & Mathieson, 1982).

When the children were teenagers, about 10 years after their graduation from the program, they were again assessed. Teachers, blind to the status of youngsters as experimental or contrast children earlier, evaluated the youth. Parents of the youths were interviewed in depth, as were the youths themselves. More of the FDRP youths expressed a liking for their own physical and personal attributes compared with the contrast group. More FDRP participants said that they disliked nothing about themselves. FDRP youth were more likely to see themselves in a

schooling situation five years into the future. The contrast youth was significantly more likely to say that the worst thing about school was trouble that one could get into.

The strongest findings of the 10 year follow-up were for juvenile delinquency. Sharp differences were found between program and control youth. Only 6% of the program youth (4 of 65 cases) in the follow-up sample as compared to 22% (12 of 54 cases) of the control youth were processed as probation cases by the County Probation Department. In addition, the severity of the offenses was much graver for the contrast youth. They committed serious delinquencies such as burglary, robbery physical assault and sexual assault, and 5 /12 contrast youth were repeat offenders. Program youth were most likely to be PINS cases - 3 of the 4 cases. (See Tables; Fig. - ").

For the program group, the estimated juvenile court costs per child was $186 compared with $1985 per child for the control group. Thus, FDRP program participation resulted in juvenile delinquency savings to the community (Lally, Mangione & Honig, 1988).

Education outcomes were not as remarkable, mostly because males from these single parent poverty families did not do better than control youth in their school work. However, program females did significantly better than their controls. They had better grades and fewer days absent from school.

Attempts to find FDRP program and control young adults have been difficult. The controls have moved a great deal and thus, data are not available to contrast FDRP participants in their current functioning in adulthood with their matched controls.

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Table 1. Summary of Probation Cases in the Syracuse Family Development Research Program's Longitudinal Sample

FDRP Group (n=65)			Control Group (n=54)		
Gender	Case Type/Offense	Number of Times	Gender	Case Type/Offenses	Number of Times
F	Ungovernable	2	F	Juvenile Delin.	1
				Petit Larceny	2
F	Ungovernable	1	F	Ungovernable	2
				Juvenile Delin.	1
M	Ungovernable	1	M	Petit Larceny	1
				Ungovernable	2
M	Juvenile Delin.	1	M	Criminal Mischief	1
				Violation of Probation	1
			M	Ungovernable	2
				Attempted Assault (2nd)	1
			M	Robbery	1
				Assault (2nd)	1
				Robbery (2nd)	1
			F	Ungovernable	1
			M	Ungovernable	1
			M	Sexual Abuse	1
			M	Burglary	1
			M	Juvenile Delin.	1
			M	Ungovernable	1
Total =4	Total Cost of Cases=$12,111		Total =12	Total Cost of Cases=$107,192	

Table 2. Student Perceptions of Themselves and Their Schooling

	Percentage of Program Students	Percentage of Control Students	Chi Square
Like Physical Attributes	33	14	3.89*
Like Personal Attributes	31	14	3.18**
Dislike Nothing About Self	31	14	3.16**
In School 5 Years From Now	53	28	4.59*
Working 5 Years From Now	35	51	2.93**
Worst Things About School-Trouble	17	34	3.44**
Would Make Active Response to Problem	63	37	4.09*

*$p < .05$
**$p < .10$

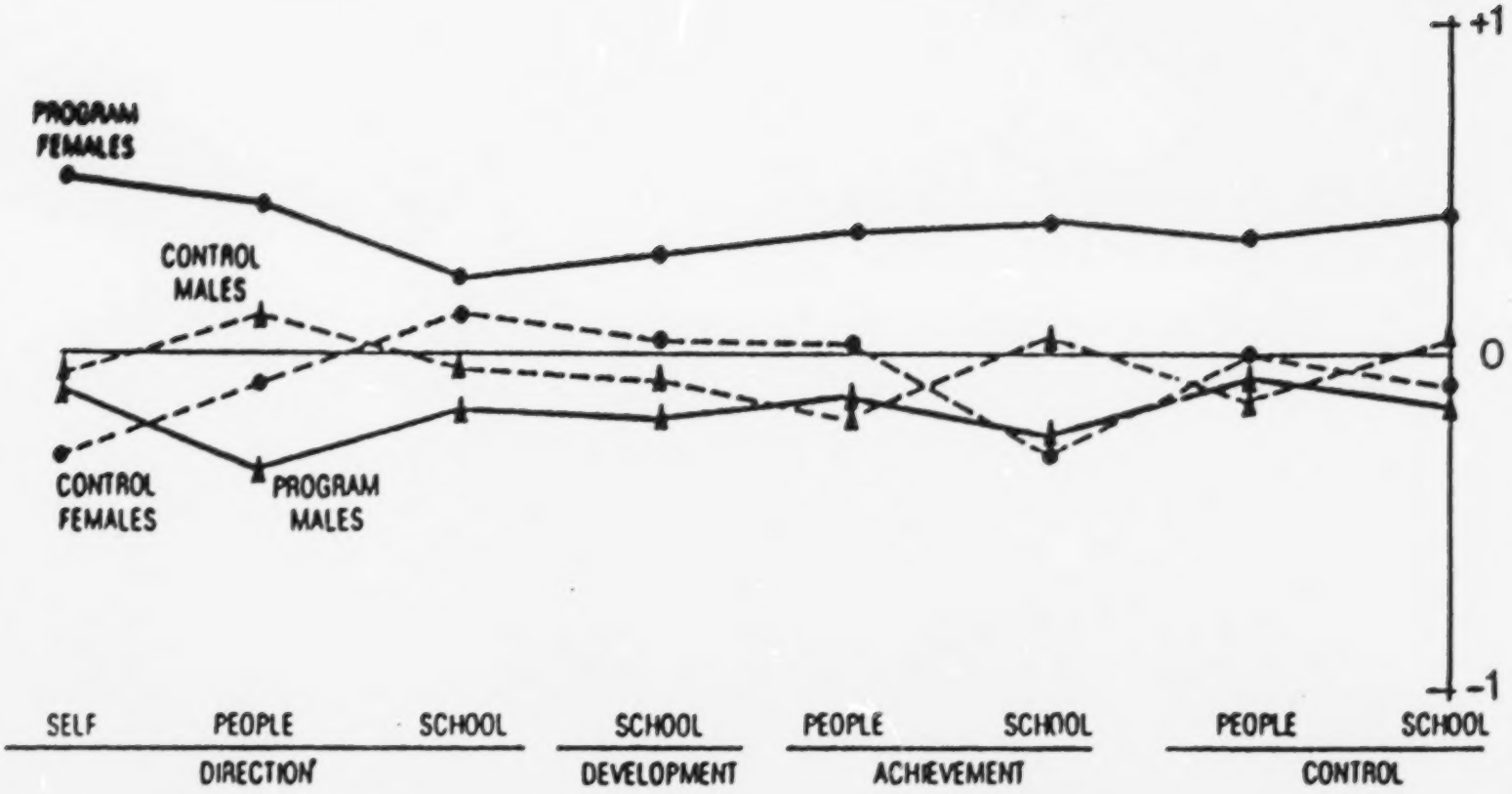


Figure 1. Mean Scores for Eight Facet Categories of Intervention and Control Males and Females.

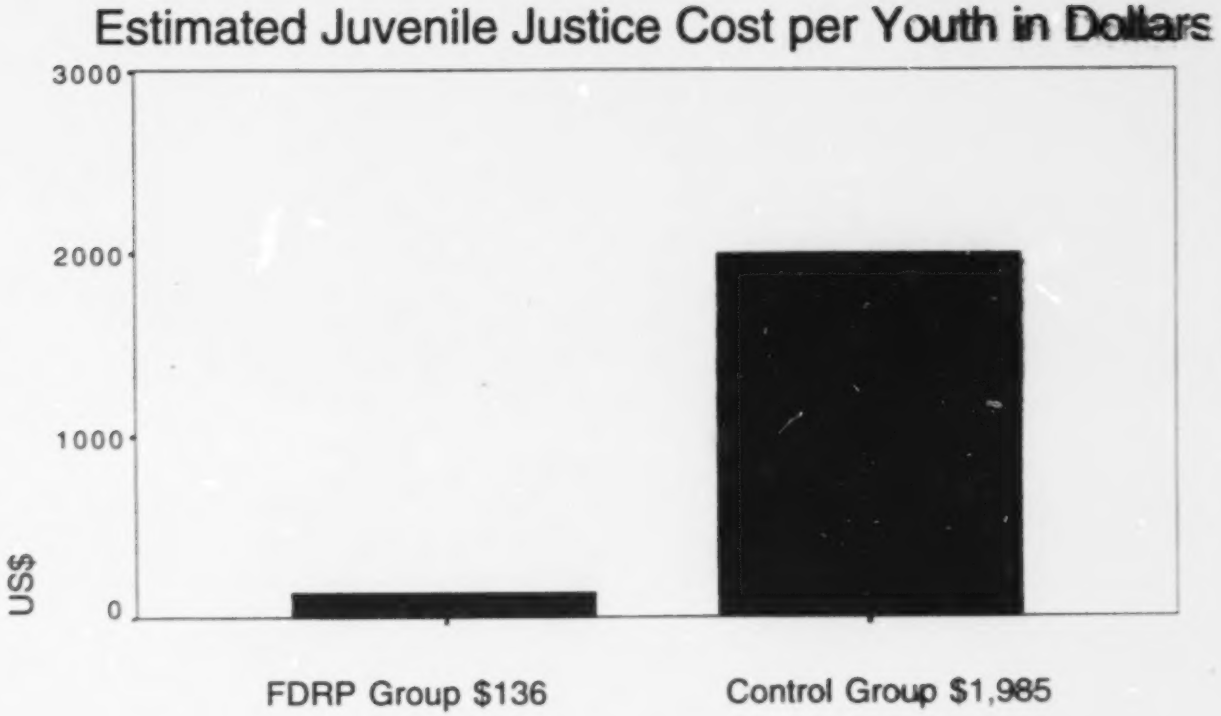

Estimated Juvenile Justice Cost per Youth in Dollars
3000
2000
1000
0
US$
FDRP Group $136
Control Group $1,985

Fig 2

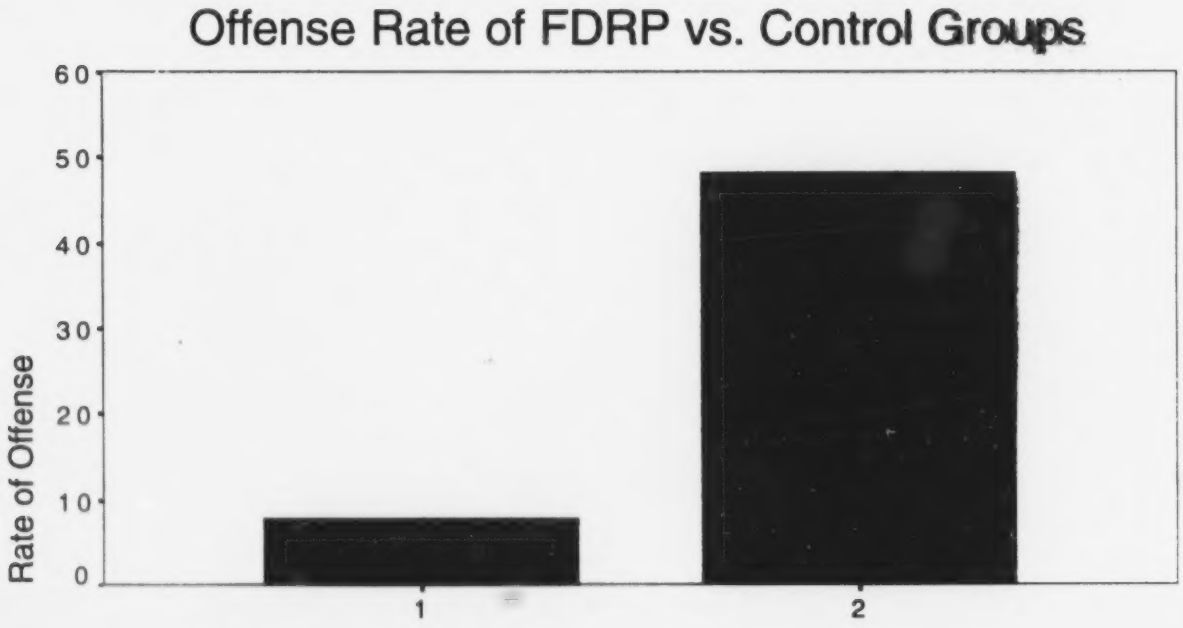
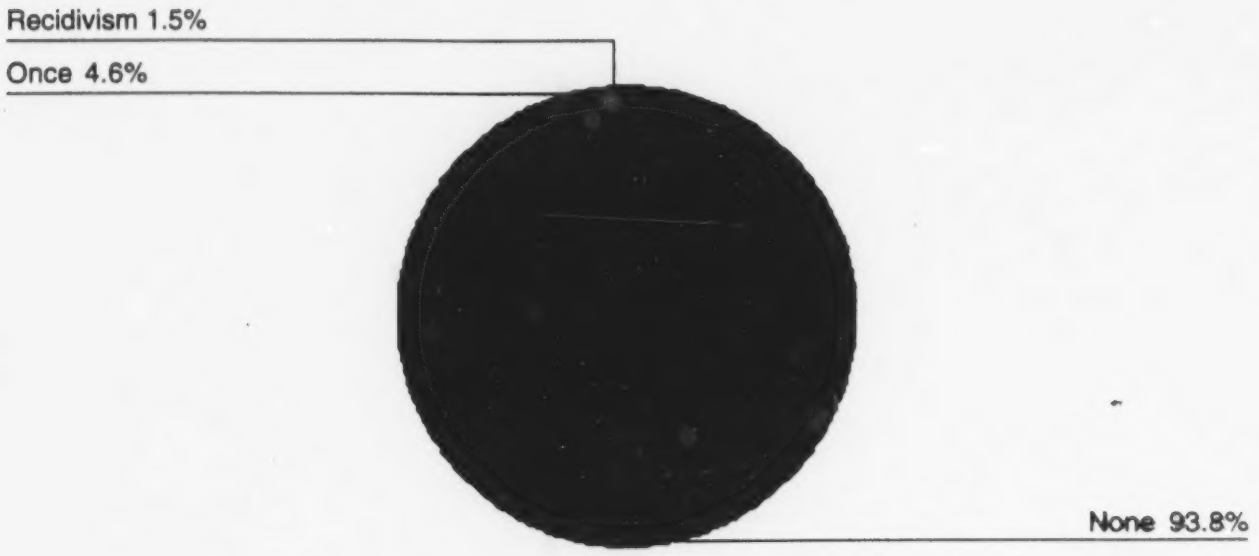

Offense Rate of FDRP vs. Control Groups
Rate of Offense
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
2
FRDP Group 7.7%
Control Group 48.1%

Fig 3

Youth with Recidivism: FDRP vs. Control Groups



FDRP Group

Control Group

Fig 4